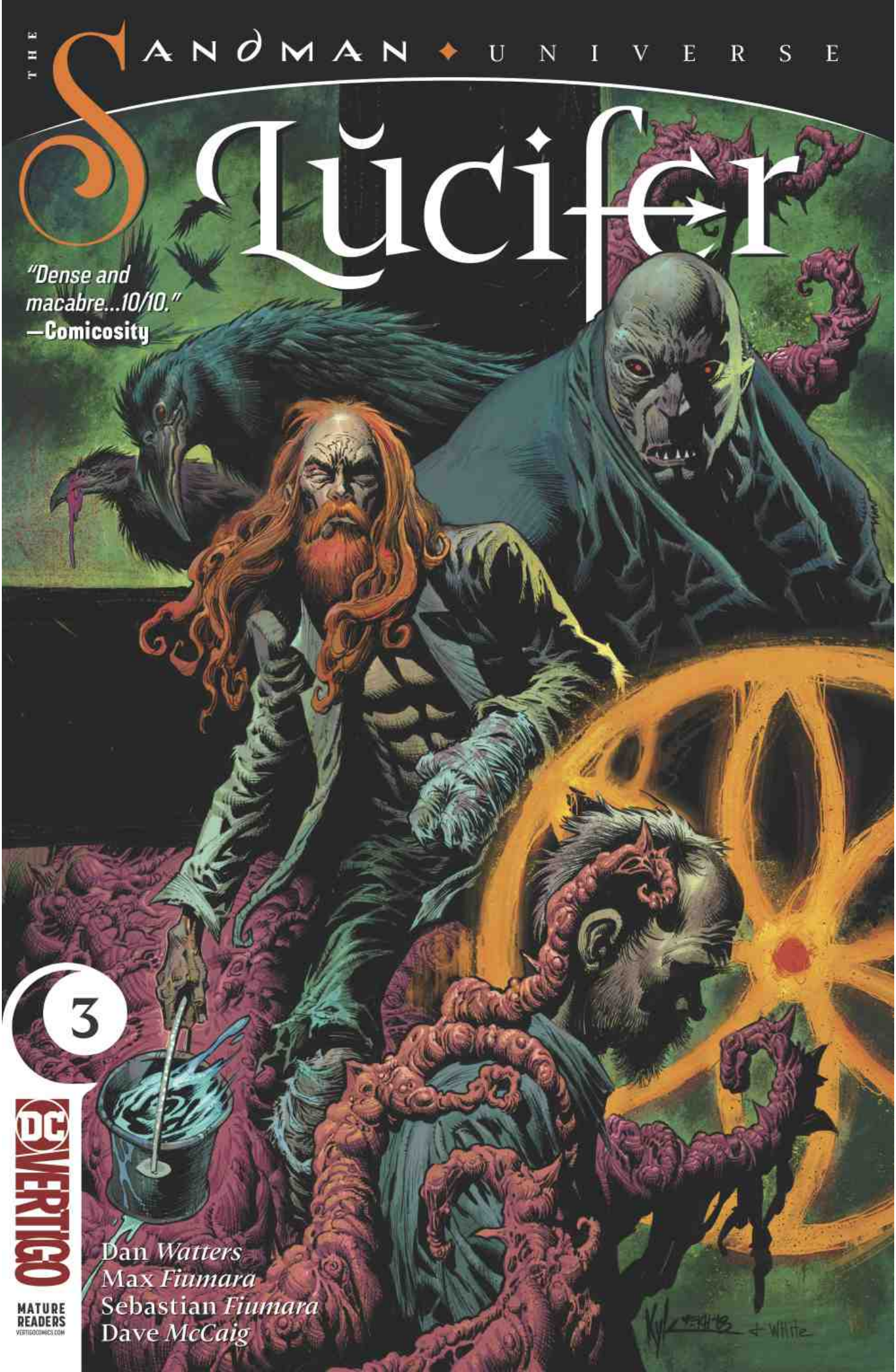
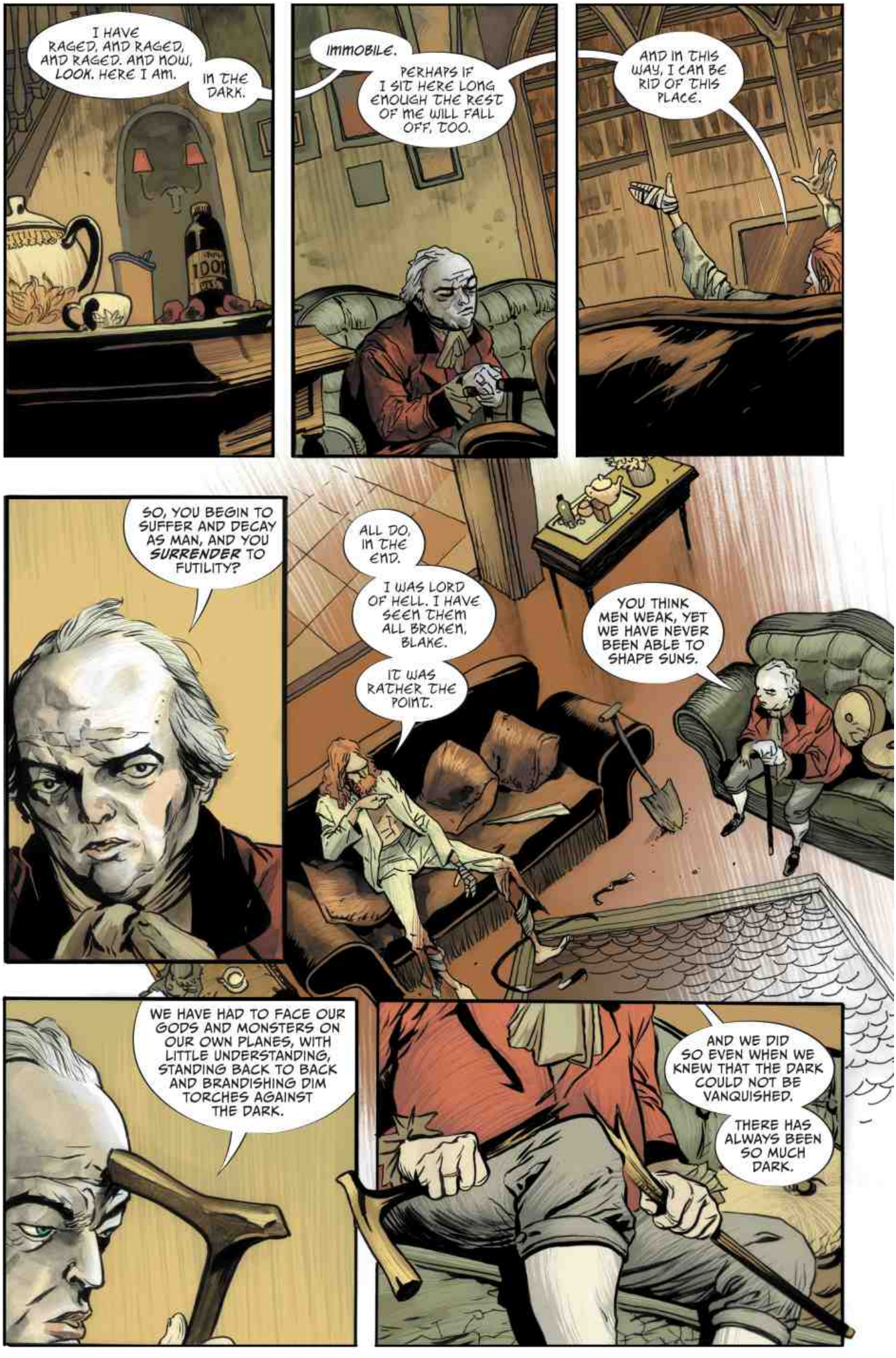

THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE
Lucifer
"Dense and macabre...10/10."
—Comicosity
3
DC VERTIGO
MATURE READERS
VERTIGOCOMICS.COM
Dan Watters
Max Fiumara
Sebastian Fiumara
Dave McCaig

GRAAAH--
AHH--AH!
LUCIFER! LUCIFER STOP!
IT WON'T WORK. WHY WON'T IT WORK?
I'LL HAVE TO REDO THESE BANDAGES AGAIN NOW.
BANDAGES! I HAVE NEVER NEEDED BANDAGES.
I WAS THE SHAPER OF SUNS, AND THE UNIVERSE BENT TO MY WILL.
I'LL GET THE IODINE. OR ELSE THIS IS GOING TO GET INFECTED.
I AM WEAK.
I AM WEAK, AND I AM TRAPPED.

...NO, I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS. I THINK HE'S DEPRESSED.
WOULD YOU MIND TALKING TO HIM?
LUCIFER. I FOUND YOUR SHOVEL. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT IT.
HELLO, BILL BLAKE. I DON'T.
IT DOES WHINE, SO.
EVERYONE MISSES YOU OUT THERE, LUCIFER.
YOU MAKE US LAUGH. YOU REALLY DO.
ONCE, I FLEW ACROSS A BLACK ABYSS OF VOID. THIS IS BEFORE HE'D MOLDED IT ALL INTO FORM, OF COURSE.
I FLEW IN A DARKNESS THAT NONE HAVE KNOWN BEFORE, OR SINCE.
AND IT MADE ME LAUGH, THIS DARKNESS.
IT WAS THE FIRST LAUGH, PERHAPS. I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.
AND THE VOID SWALLOWED IT, BECAUSE IT HAD NOTHING TO SEND BACK IN ECHO.
HOW ARE YOU BOYS GETTING ON?
IN ALL HONESTY, I FEAR I HAVE NOT CHEERED HIM THUS FAR.
AND HE APPEARS TO HAVE CUT OFF ONE OF HIS FINGERS.
OH, WAIT. TWO, NOW.
PERHAPS I SHOULD TAKE THAT OFF HIM.


I HAVE RAGED, AND RAGED, AND RAGED. AND NOW, LOOK. HERE I AM.
IN THE DARK.
IMMOBILE.
PERHAPS IF I SIT HERE LONG ENOUGH THE REST OF ME WILL FALL OFF, TOO.
AND IN THIS WAY, I CAN BE RID OF THIS PLACE.
SO, YOU BEGIN TO SUFFER AND DECAY AS MAN, AND YOU SURRENDER TO FUTILITY?
ALL DO, IN THE END.
I WAS LORD OF HELL. I HAVE SEEN THEM ALL BROKEN, BLAKE.
IT WAS RATHER THE POINT.
YOU THINK MEN WEAK, YET WE HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO SHAPE SUNS.
WE HAVE HAD TO FACE OUR GODS AND MONSTERS ON OUR OWN PLANES, WITH LITTLE UNDERSTANDING, STANDING BACK TO BACK AND BRANDISHING DIM TORCHES AGAINST THE DARK.
AND WE DID SO EVEN WHEN WE KNEW THAT THE DARK COULD NOT BE VANQUISHED.
THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN SO MUCH DARK.

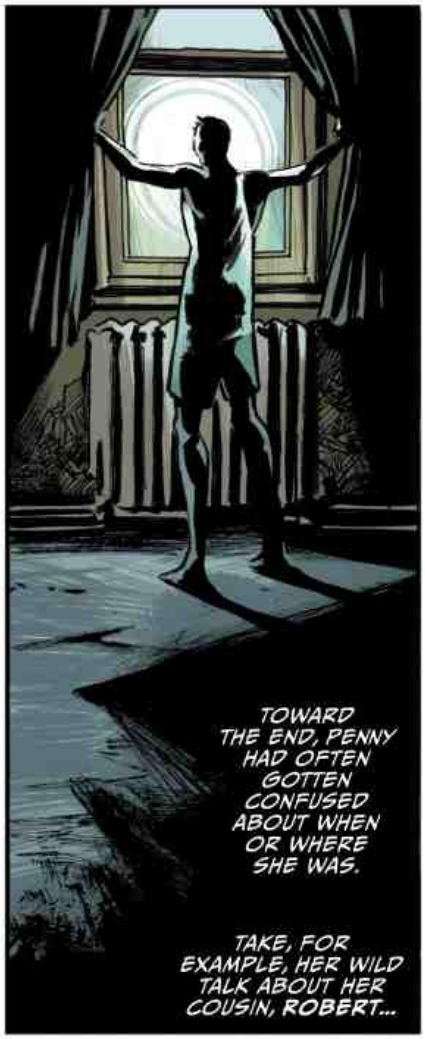
IT'S SO DARK THAT JOHN DECKER IS NOT SURE IF HE IS WAKING **FROM** OR **INTO** THE NIGHTMARE.
THE FIRST SYMPTOM THAT **PENNY** SHOWED WHEN HER **TUMOR** BEGAN TO DEVELOP WAS SHE COULD SMELL FRESH-CUT GRASS THAT **WASN'T** THERE.

NOW HE **SMELLS** COLD, WET ASHES-- AND BLOOD. BUT HE'S NOT SURE IF HE'S TASTING THAT.
HE REMEMBERS THE FIRST TIME SHE WOKE ANXIOUS AND CONFUSED, EVEN AS HE HELD HER HAND. IT WAS BECOMING HARDER FOR HER TO MAKE CONNECTIONS AND SEE THINGS AS THEY WERE.

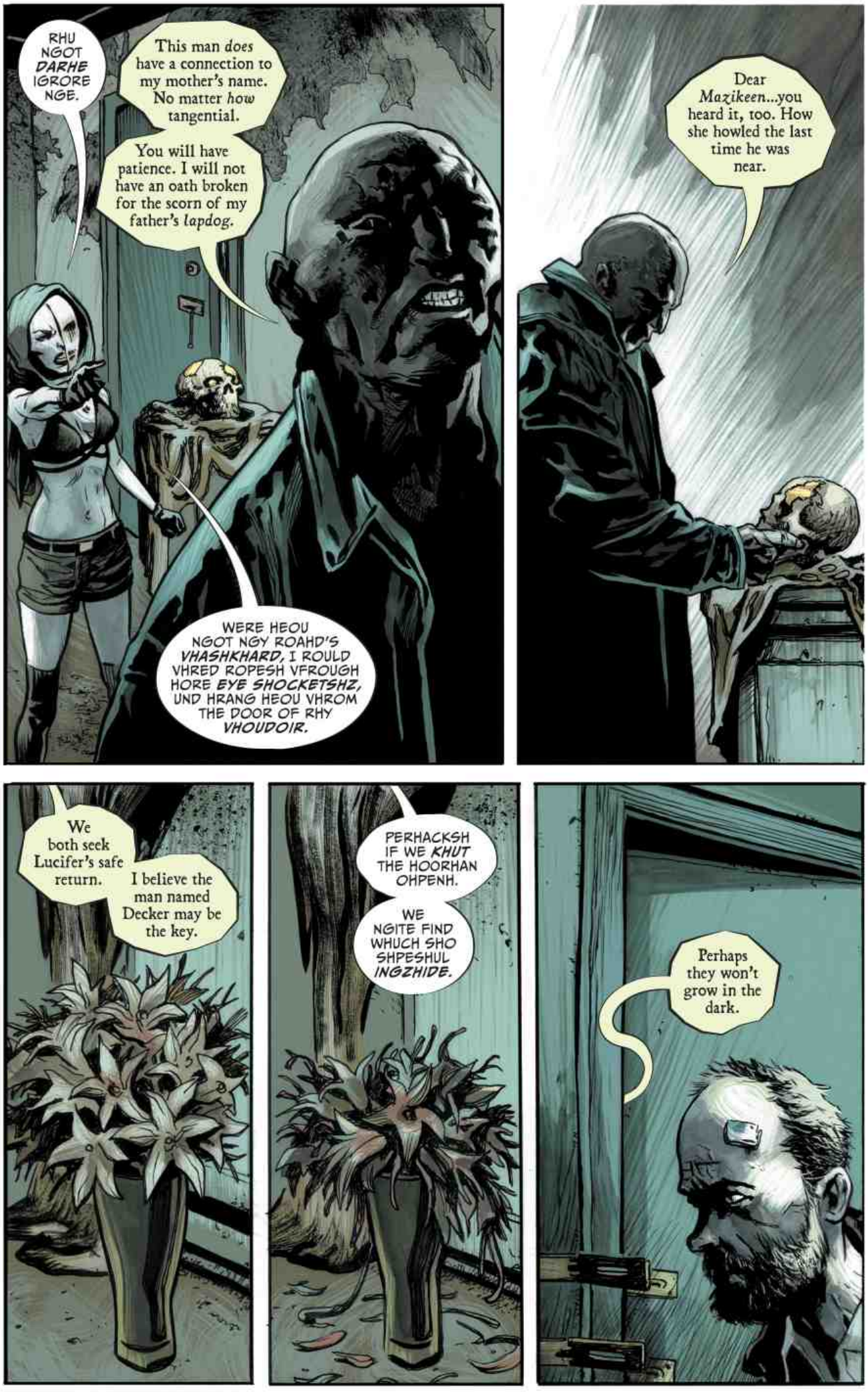
HE RECALLS A BRIGHT **RED** EYE GLOWERING DOWN AT HIM. THAT CARNIVOROUS, **BLOOD**-SLITTED CATARACT.
PERHAPS IT WAS JUST THE LIGHT BLINKING ON A **RESPIRATOR** BESIDE HIS SICKBED.
PERHAPS THIS IS A **HOSPITAL.** PERHAPS HE'S JUST GETTING CONFUSED.

BUT PENNY SHOWED SYMPTOMS FOR MONTHS BEFORE DETERIORATING.
HE ONLY FOUND OUT HE HAD CANCER **YESTERDAY.**

IT **WAS** YESTERDAY, WASN'T IT?
IT'S SO HARD TO BE CERTAIN.
IT'S SO **DARK.**


TOWARD THE END, PENNY HAD OFTEN GOTTEN CONFUSED ABOUT WHEN OR WHERE SHE WAS.
TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, HER WILD TALK ABOUT HER COUSIN, **ROBERT...**

...AND A PLACE CALLED GATELY HOUSE.
THE QUESTION BECOMES, THEN...
SZHE RERAINGHS SZILENK, KHULIBUHN.
DO YOU STOP TRUSTING WHAT YOUR SENSES TELL YOU?
OR DO YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT THAT THE MONSTERS IN THE DARK HAVE BECOME REAL...AT LEAST FOR YOU?
I brought her flowers again.
THE HOORHAN HASH NO CONNECSHUN TO HER. THICH HASH VHECOME CLEAH.
All the ones I pick die so quickly.


RHU NGOT DARHE IGRORE NGE.
This man does have a connection to my mother's name. No matter how tangential.
You will have patience. I will not have an oath broken for the scorn of my father's lapdog.
WERE HEOU NGOT NGY ROAHD'S VHASHKHARD, I ROULD VHRED ROPESH VFROUGH HORE EYE SHOCKETSHZ, UND HRANG HEOU VHROM THE DOOR OF RHY VHOUDOIR.
Dear Mazikeen...you heard it, too. How she howled the last time he was near.
We both seek Lucifer's safe return.
I believe the man named Decker may be the key.
PERHACKSH IF WE KHUT THE HOORHAN OHPENH.
WE NGITE FIND WHUCH SHO SHPESHUL INGZHIDE.
Perhaps they won't grow in the dark.

YOU'RE IN CHECK.
YOU MOVED YOUR PAWN. I KNOW YOU DID.
DID NOT.
YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE THIS, ALWAYS CHEATED...
EVEN BACK WHEN WE PLAYED WITH SINNER BONES AT THE BOTTOM OF BOTTOMLESS PITS.

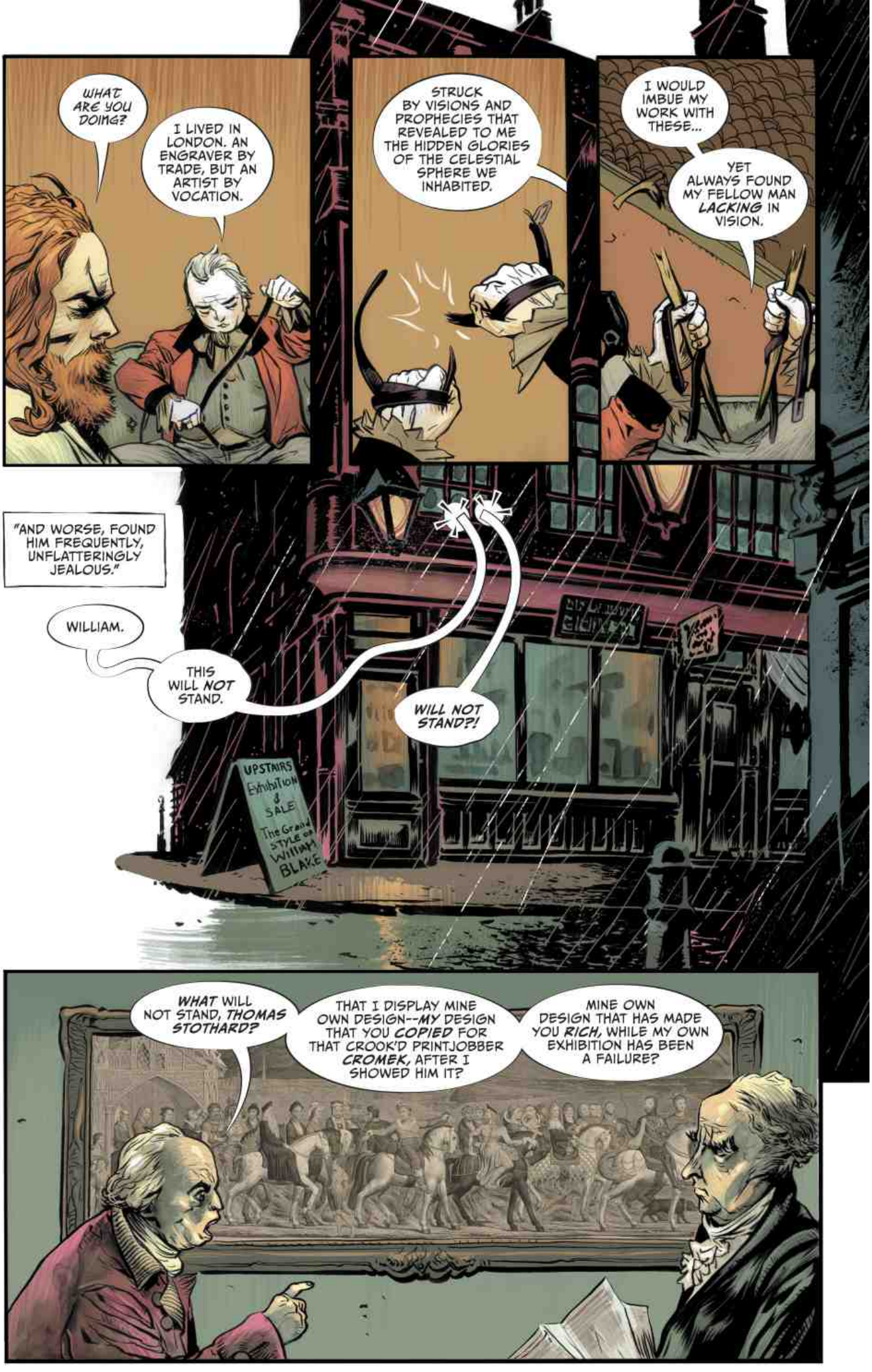
JOHN, IT'S ME. DON'T SCREAM.
I TRIED. I TRIED TO WARN YOU.
GATELY HOUSE WAS NOT MEANT FOR YOU.
YOU'RE-- ONE OF THOSE THINGS...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
B-BUT I SAW THEM...
WHAT... WHAT THE LIVING FUCK IS GOING ON?
I HOPED THEY'D NEVER TURN THEIR ATTENTIONS ON YOU.
I TRIED TO SPARE YOU, I REALLY DID.
THIS ALL HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH PENNY...?
THAT DOESN'T MATTER, NOT RIGHT NOW.
TAKE THIS. IT WILL HIDE YOU ONCE YOU'RE OUT OF HERE.

YOU HAVE TO COME WITH ME. THOSE *THINGS*...

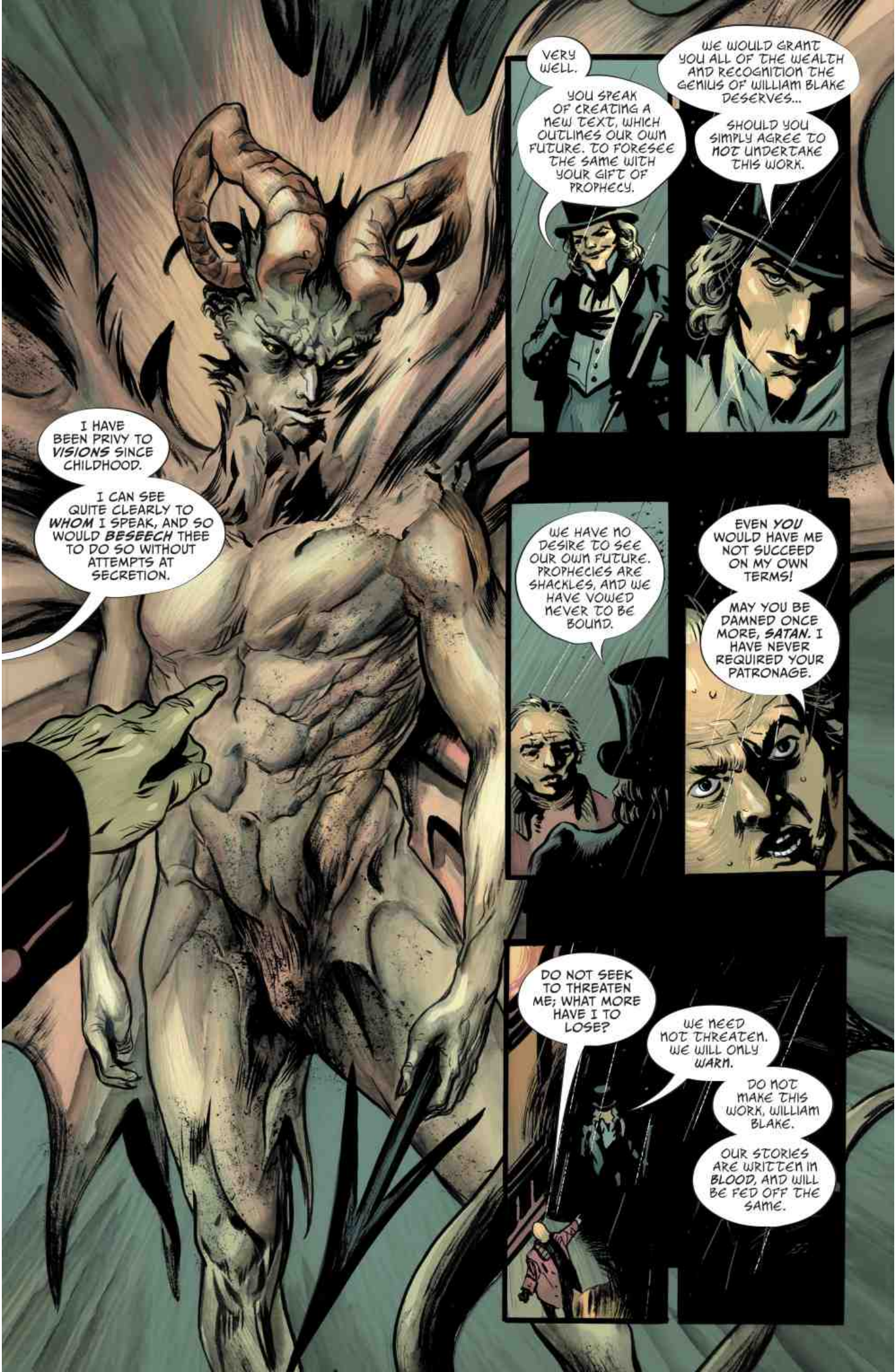
I'LL BE FINE. NO ONE WILL REALIZE IT WAS ME WHO LEFT YOUR BEDROOM DOOR UNLOCKED.
WHERE ARE YOU STAYING? I'LL COME BY TOMORROW AND EXPLAIN *EVERYTHING*.

THE... *STARLIGHT MOTEL*. FEW BLOCKS EAST.
TOMORROW, THEN. SIX P.M. NOW *GO!*
YOU HAVE TO GO...

TO LIVE AGAIN
AND HE DOES, FLEEING INTO THE NIGHT.
CONFUSED AND ALONE...AND HE FEELS THE DEVIL AT HIS BACK.


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I LIVED IN LONDON. AN ENGRAVER BY TRADE, BUT AN ARTIST BY VOCATION.
STRUCK BY VISIONS AND PROPHECIES THAT REVEALED TO ME THE HIDDEN GLORIES OF THE CELESTIAL SPHERE WE INHABITED.
I WOULD IMBUE MY WORK WITH THESE...
YET ALWAYS FOUND MY FELLOW MAN LACKING IN VISION.
"AND WORSE, FOUND HIM FREQUENTLY, UNFLATTERINGLY JEALOUS."
WILLIAM.
THIS WILL NOT STAND.
WILL NOT STAND?!
UPSTAIRS Exhibition & SALE The Grand STYLE of WILLIAM BLAKE
WHAT WILL NOT STAND, THOMAS STOTHARD?
THAT I DISPLAY MINE OWN DESIGN--MY DESIGN THAT YOU COPIED FOR THAT CROOK'D PRINTJOBBER CROMEK, AFTER I SHOWED HIM IT?
MINE OWN DESIGN THAT HAS MADE YOU RICH, WHILE MY OWN EXHIBITION HAS BEEN A FAILURE?

YOU SPEAK NONSENSE, WILLIAM.
MY PILGRIMAGE TO CANTERBURY IS A SUCCESS, BUT NOT MY ONLY SUCCESS. WHAT NEED WOULD I HAVE TO PLAGIARIZE YOU?
EVER SINCE WE WERE AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, YOU HAVE SHOWN GLIMMERS OF THE GREAT BEAUTY YOU'RE CAPABLE OF CREATING.
YET YOU INSIST ON THESE PRINTS--THESE DISTORTED CARICATURES.
PERHAPS IF YOU WORKED IN OILS...IF YOU'D RELAX YOUR STYLE SOME...THESE EMPTY ROOMS WOULD BE FILLED WITH BUYERS.
INSTEAD, YOU RETURN TO PETTY RIVALRY, ANGERED BY MY SUCCESS, AND THE NEWSPAPERS CONSIDER YOUR WORK A FARRAGO OF NONSENSE.
THESE CRITICS...MORE FOOLS LIKE YOU, STOTHARD.
MY NEXT WORK WILL BE UNDENIABLE IN ITS GENIUS, AND YOU DEVILS WILL FINALLY SEE.
THE EBULLITIONS OF A DISTEMPERED BRAIN
INDEED, I HAVE HAD VISIONS OF PROPHECY POUR OF RECENT INTO MY HEAD...
AND MY NEXT WORK SHALL BE A FORECAST OF THE DEVIL'S OWN FUTURE.
I WISH YOU WELL WITH IT.
AT LEAST THAT IS NOT A COPY OF MY WORK.
WILLIAM BLAKE?
IT IS MY MISFORTUNE TO BE HE.
HAVE YOU COME TO GAWP AT THE MAD POET, SIR? IT IS UNLIKELY YOU HAVE COME TO BUY ANY ART.
I AM INDEED AN ADMIRER OF YOUR WORK, AND I--
I ASSURE YOU, SIR...


I HAVE BEEN PRIVY TO *VISIONS* SINCE CHILDHOOD.
I CAN SEE QUITE CLEARLY TO *WHOM* I SPEAK, AND SO WOULD *BESEECH* THEE TO DO SO WITHOUT ATTEMPTS AT SECRETION.
VERY WELL.
YOU SPEAK OF CREATING A NEW TEXT, WHICH OUTLINES OUR OWN FUTURE. TO FORESEE THE SAME WITH YOUR GIFT OF PROPHECY.
WE WOULD GRANT YOU ALL OF THE WEALTH AND RECOGNITION THE GENIUS OF WILLIAM BLAKE DESERVES...
SHOULD YOU SIMPLY AGREE TO NOT UNDERTAKE THIS WORK.
WE HAVE NO DESIRE TO SEE OUR OWN FUTURE. PROPHECIES ARE SHACKLES, AND WE HAVE VOWED NEVER TO BE BOUND.
EVEN *YOU* WOULD HAVE ME NOT SUCCEED ON MY OWN TERMS!
MAY YOU BE DAMNED ONCE MORE, *SATAN.* I HAVE NEVER REQUIRED YOUR PATRONAGE.
DO NOT SEEK TO THREATEN ME; WHAT MORE HAVE I TO LOSE?
WE NEED NOT THREATEN. WE WILL ONLY *WARN.*
DO NOT MAKE THIS WORK, WILLIAM BLAKE.
OUR STORIES ARE WRITTEN IN BLOOD, AND WILL BE FED OFF THE SAME.

"RETURN'D HOME, MY BELOVED CATHERINE TOO DID BESEECH ME TO GIVE UP THIS FOLLY."
I AM WORKING, CATHERINE.
THEN ALLOW ME TO ASSIST YOU.
NOT THIS TIME. THE VISIONS OF THIS PIECE ARE SO POISON'D I WOULD NOT HAVE THEM INFECT YOU, MY LOVE.
OH, WILLIAM. YOU HAVE OTHER COMMISSIONS.
OTHER WORKS OVERDUE FOR PAYING CLIENTS.
"BUT THE MUSES SANG IN DEAFENING CHORUS...
"AND LIKE LOS AT HIS FORGE, I SET TO WORK AS GREAT VISIONS FLASH'D AROUND ME, AND FLICKER'D IN MY EYES.
"AND THE WORK AS IT GREW...FOR IT WAS NOT WRITTEN, BUT GREW AS A LIVING THING DOES...WAS BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIBLE AND EFFULGENT WITH HORRORS.
"AND I ETCHED AND BLOTTED UNTIL MY FINGERS BLISTER'D AND MUSCLES SEIZED...
"YET I COULD NOT KEEP UP WITH THE FURY OF THE TALES WITHIN ME. THEY CHURN'D, BURNING ME WITHIN.
"AND AS I LISTEN'D THE BOOK WHISPER'D TO ME OF MORE FUTURES, YET UNWRITTEN...AND I UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE HAD MEANT, AT LAST...
"AND I LET OUT AN ANIMAL HOWL, THAT I KNOW NOT WHETHER WAS OF AGONY OR LAUGHTER..."
WILLIAM!
WILLIAM!

HIS STORIES WILL BE WRITTEN IN BLOOD!
HE SAID IT HIMSELF.
WILLIAM, WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE?*
ONLY WHAT THE WORK DEMANDS...ONLY WHAT WILL MAKE IT *GREAT.*
IT NEEDS BLOOD. IT NEEDS *MORE* BLOOD.
STOP. *STOP!* THIS IS GREATNESS? AT THE COST OF YOUR HEART AND SOUL?
YOU WOULD BE A TEXT, AND BE LESS THAN A MAN?

"I THINK...I LIKE TO THINK...THAT I SAW, IN HER EYES, A REFLECTION OF MYSELF. THAT I SAW THE HORROR OF IT ALL.
"I DO NOT TRULY KNOW...
"BUT I KNOW THAT I RETURNED THE BOOK TO HIM IT WAS MADE FOR...
"PERHAPS ONE DAY HE MAY FIND A USE FOR IT."
THE ANNULMENT OF HEAVEN AND HELL
BY
WILLIAM BLAKE

SHE SAVED ME, AS SHE ALWAYS DID.
I NEVER ACHIEVED A GREAT WORK IN THE EYES OF MY FELLOWS, BUT YEARS LATER, SHE STOOD BY THE SIDE OF MY DEATHBED.
GREAT WORKS REQUIRE ASSISTANCE, LEST THEY CONSUME US WHOLE.
HNN-HUH-- AHH!
HMMMMG.
YOU FORMED AN ARMY ONCE, AGAINST THE ALMIGHTY. DID YOU CONSIDER THAT AN ACT OF WEAKNESS?
SO LIFT THY SHOVEL, SIR. WE SHALL WORK TOWARD A MORE POWERFUL SYSTEM IN UNISON, NOT BE ENSLAVED BY IT.
WE SHALL DIG TOGETHER!
YOU OFFER ME HELP?
YES, FOR IT SHALL NEVER OCCUR TO YOU TO ASK. I SHALL, AS MILTON, JOIN THE DEVIL'S PARTY.
COME ON...
LET US STRAIN...AND STRIVE...
OOF.
THE ANNULMENT OF HEAVEN AND HELL
BY WILLIAM BLAKE
AND SUFFER TOGETHER.

LUCIFER, ARE YOU...?
GONE.
AND MORE MESS.
THE ANNULMENT OF HEAVEN AND HELL BY WILLIAM BLAKE
MORE...
LOOK! THERE GOES LUCIFER!
WHERE?
UP AND ABOUT AT LAST.
THE ANNULMENT OF HEAVEN AND HELL BY WILLIAM BLAKE

HERE! LOOK!
ANOTHER. ANOTHER FACE.
WHO IS IT?
THE EARTH IS BRITTLE.
TAKE THE SCOOTER--FETCH SOME WATER WITH WHICH TO LOOSEN IT.

I SHALL RETURN.

LUCIFER, YOU FOOL.
HOW DARE YOU?
THE ANNULMENT OF HEAVEN AND HELL

As she turn'd and turn'd these pages there rose in her chest like shuddering ice A fear, a fury, and a hatred that petrified within her.
For the truth, she found, of the Devil's new domain. And the role that had been writ for her in mad poet's blood.

8. In fetters of the mind he writhed; Restless, torn from reason and hope He rent the earth in search of all that he had lost; but though it lay there he did not know it.

For he saw not this truth; that a cold shadow had crept with spider step into the Devil's new domain; that with torments of the soul sought to twist the cords and knot this cold void into a shaped place that would serve his needs.

And the name of this shadow was

BLAKE! I AM RETURNED. I HOPE I HAVE NOT SPILLED ANY.
BLAKE?
ARE YOU HERE?
BLAKE...
HELP ME.
"AS JOB LEARNED WELL, THERE'S ALWAYS MORE TO LOSE..."

HOW MUCH CAN WE AFFORD BEFORE WE'RE GONE...
AND JUST A HOLLOW SHELL OF WHAT ONCE WAS?
N-No!
What have you done?
What have you done?!
BE CALMED. THAT THING WAS ONLY FLESH AND BONE.
NO TRACE OF SPIRIT REMAINS IN THE HUSK...MUST BE RETRIEVED, I FEAR, FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE.
AND YET THIS QUEST PROMISES TO INVOKE THE WRATH OF HEAVEN, HELL, AND MUCH BETWEEN.
AND SO, IF THIS IS WHAT YOU WISH, I ASK THAT YOU MAKE SACRIFICE, TOO, TO THIS CAUSE.

I don't... I don't know. I must think...
SAY YES.
AGREE WITH HIM, DO ALL THAT HE REQUESTS.
BUT FORGET NOT THAT *THIS* IS HE WHO REDUCED YOU, MUCH LIKE ME, TO A SHADE OF WHAT YOU COULD HAVE BEEN.
DON'T FORGET TO *HATE* HIM.
WELL?
Yes, Father.
Yes.
AND JACK'S GAME BEGINS...
To Be Continued

Lucifer

"THE ANNULMENT OF HEAVEN AND HELL"

Written by DAN WATTERS

Illustrated by MAX FIUMARA & SEBASTIAN FIUMARA

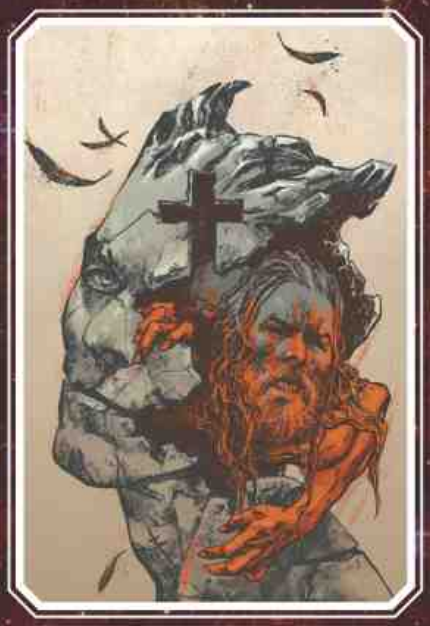
Colors by DAVE MCCAIG

Letters by STEVE WANDS

Cover by KYLE HOTZ & DEAN WHITE

EDITED BY AMEDEO TURTURRO & MOLLY MAHAN
ASSISTANT EDITOR MAGGIE HOWELL
EXECUTIVE EDITOR MARK DOYLE

LUCIFER based on characters created by Neil Gaiman, Sam Kieth, and Mike Dringenberg
Curated for THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE by Neil Gaiman



NEXT ISSUE:
THE PECULIAR CASE OF THE MAN ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR

Decker loses an hour. The ladies seek their third. Lucifer finds himself speechless.

BOB HARRAS Senior VP – Editor-in-Chief, DC Comics | MARK DOYLE Executive Editor, Vertigo & Black Label
DAN DiDIO Publisher | JIM LEE Publisher & Chief Creative Officer | AMIT DESAI Executive VP – Business & Marketing Strategy, Direct to Consumer & Global Franchise Management
BOBBIE CHASE VP & Executive Editor, Young Reader & Talent Development | MARK CHIARELLO Senior VP – Art, Design & Collected Editions | JOHN CUNNINGHAM Senior VP – Sales & Trade Marketing
BRIAR DARDEN VP – Business Affairs | ANNE DePIES Senior VP – Business Strategy, Finance & Administration | DON FALLETTI VP – Manufacturing Operations
LAWRENCE GANEM VP – Editorial Administration & Talent Relations | ALISON GILL Senior VP – Manufacturing & Operations | JASON GREENBERG VP – Business Strategy & Finance
HANK KANALZ Senior VP – Editorial Strategy & Administration | JAY KOGAN Senior VP – Legal Affairs | NICK J. NAPOLITANO VP – Manufacturing Administration
LISETTE OSTERLOH VP – Digital Marketing & Events | EDDIE SCANNELL VP – Consumer Marketing | COURTNEY SIMMONS Senior VP – Publicity & Communications
JIM (SKI) SOKOLOWSKI VP – Comic Book Specialty Sales & Trade Marketing | NANCY SPEARS VP – Mass, Book, Digital Sales & Trade Marketing | MICHELE R. WELLS VP – Content Strategy

LUCIFER 3, February, 2019. Published monthly by DC Comics, 2900 W. Alameda Avenue, Burbank, CA 91505. GST # is R125821072. Copyright © 2018 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. DC VERTIGO and all characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork. For Advertising and Custom Publishing contact dccomicsadvertising@dccomics.com. For details on DC Comics Ratings, visit dccomics.com/go/ratings.

SON OF ULTRON